

CHE Task Team on South African Government Involvement in, and Regulation of, Higher Education, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) has established a Task Team to investigate government involvement in higher education since 1994, in the context of the pursuit of specific policy goals and the principles of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and public accountability.

The Task Team comprises

- Dr Khotso Mokhele – (Chairperson)
- Dr Saleem Badat – Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University (Convener)
- Mr Steven Friedman – Research Associate, IDASA
- Ms Judith February – Programme Manager, IDASA
- Prof. Ebrima Sall – Head of Research and Documentation, CODESRIA
- Dr Frene Ginwala – member of the Council on Higher Education
- Justice Dennis Davis – Judge in the Cape High Court
- Dr Mala Singh – Interim Chief Executive Officer, Council on Higher Education
- Dr Adam Habib – Executive Director, Human Sciences Research Council
- Prof Loyiso Nongxa, Vice-Chancellor, University of the Witwatersrand
- Prof Peter Vale – Nelson Mandela Chair of Politics, Rhodes University.

The Task Team's investigation takes place against a backdrop of concerns, and claims, about government 'interference' in higher education. Its purpose is to stimulate debate and build shared understanding, as well as produce to a Research Report, on:

- The appropriate nature and modes of government involvement in higher education transformation;
- Appropriate relationships between government, other bodies with higher education regulatory functions, and higher education institutions; and
- Appropriate conceptions of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and public accountability, in general and in the specific context of South Africa and higher education transformation.

Further details on the proposed investigation are contained in the terms of reference of the investigation, available from the CHE.

The Task Team's investigation has five major activities:

- Calling for submissions from institutions, members of the higher education community, stakeholder bodies and civil society groupings;
- Convening a series of regional fora to allow debate on the topics under investigation;
- Interviewing representatives of key role-players;
- Undertaking research within the CHE;
- Commissioning research on selected topics.

The Task Team will critically review and analyse the data collected, and advance arguments and conclusions on the issues under investigation. It is expected that the Task Team will produce its report in late 2007.

Should you wish to contribute to the Task Team's investigation, or require further information about the work of the Task Team, please contact the project manager, Carol Clarke at telephone 012 392 9142, fax 012 392 9110 and e-mail clarke.c@che.ac.za